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ABSTRACT

The report on educational development in Sierra Leone describes plans and policies set by the Ministry of Education to quicken the pace of social and economic development. In line with its objectives of eliminating illiteracy and providing primary education to every child of school age, the government has allocated a high proportion of the national budget to education. Considerable expansion has taken place in the educational system since Sierra Leone's independence, although the target of universal primary education has not yet been met. Reasons advanced by the government for its failure to meet its educational objectives include lack of facilities to meet increased enrollment, financial problems, low educational interest and standards in rural areas, and an insufficient number of qualified teachers. Expansion in secondary and higher education during 1974-76 has been impressive, particularly in the fields of home economics, technical, vocational, agricultural, and business education. Teacher education at Sierra Leone's six teachers colleges showed an improvement in standards and an increase in activities such as in-service teacher training during this period. Progress was also made from 1974-76 in guidance and counseling functions. (Author/DB)

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REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

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International Conference On Education
36th Session
Geneva, 30th August - 8th September, 1977

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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R E P O R T
(PART II)

The Development of Education in Sierra Leone 1974/75 - 1975/76

Ministry of Education
Planning Unit
August, 1977.

SP 010 304

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PART II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN SIERRA LEONE 1974/75 - 1975/76

Introduction

1. The main tendencies in the educational development in Sierra Leone during the period under review have been guided by several educational policies and programmes for instance, the government 'White Paper' on Education Policy, 1970, the Education Review* and the National Development Plan, 1974/75 - 1978/79.

2. The hopes and aspirations to quicken the pace of social and economic development of most African Countries were raised just before and after independence. The educational system of Sierra Leone has expanded considerably during the past fifteen years. There is an increasing demand for further expansion since the ultimate and most pressing aim of our educational system is to eliminate illiteracy and to provide primary education to every child of school-age. So much importance is attached to education because it is a fundamental ingredient for the nation's social and economic development. In this respect, it is not surprising that education occupied a very high proportion of government's recurrent expenditure in Sierra Leone. Until now the country is still far from the target originally set for Primary Schools. However, expansion in the secondary and higher education was quite impressive.

SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

3. The administration of education continued to be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (See Annex I).

4. For the effective administration of Education Service, the Ministry embarked on the decentralisation of the administrative functions at Headquarters.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

5. The organisation and structure of education has more or less retained the same pattern at the following levels:- Pre-Primary, Primary, Secondary, Technical, Teacher and University Education. (See Annex II)

PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

6. The provision of facilities at this level is still limited although the number of nursery schools continued to increase in the capital and in the main provincial towns.

*The final Education Review Report is still under preparation but non-controversial ideas have been used.

7. Education at this level continued to be a private business but some of the schools received government subsidy to pay the salaries of qualified teachers and scholarships for the training of their teachers.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

8. Two types of primary education continued to function in Sierra Leone:-

(i) Private Schools which receive no grants from Government and are therefore free to manage their institutions within the provisions embodied in the Education Act. There are about 5% of such schools in the country.

(ii) Government Assisted Primary Schools which receive grants from Government and must therefore abide by the policy stipulated by the Ministry of Education. The majority of these schools remained to be under the supervision of the Education Secretaries who mediate between the schools and the government. Both types of schools continued to be accessible to all pupils.

9. The primary course was still of seven year's duration with the ages of children, ranging from 5 - 12 years. With the increasing enrolment, accommodation continued to be a problem even with the introduction of the Double Shift System in a few more schools, especially in the Western Area where more schools continued to be engaged in the Shift System.

10. Apart ffom Private Schools that charge higher fees, school fees on the average throughout the country continued to be approximately Le1.50 per annum. This amount is considered too high by most parents as they have to spend more on other items to maintain the children in schools. The Selective Entrance Examination was attempted by all the pupils in Class VII. In March 1975 and 1976, over sixteen thousand pupils attempted this examination. Approximately 60 percent of the children gained entrance to secondary schools and this continued to show slight improvement each year. However, there are more repeaters in Class VII than in the other classes. This is because the examination taken in Class VII is a PUBLIC ONE and some schools, especially in the villages and rural areas would not measure up to the standard expected. The proportion of drop-outs and repeaters continued to decline gradually as the retention rates in primary schools improved from 44.3%

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in 1973/74 to 46.3% in 1974/75 and 47.5% in 1975/76.

11. Enrolment in Primary Schools continued to expand at about 7.4% per annum in 1975/76 as compared with 4.3% in 1974/75. Enrolment in Primary Schools increased from 191,687 in 1974/75 to 205,910 in 1975/76 representing an annual growth rate of 7.4%. The proportion of Primary School-age population enrolled in Schools increased from 32% in 1974/75 to 33% in 1975/76.

12. Although there was a significant increase in enrolment, the proportion of Primary School-age Population enrolled in schools continued to be quite low as a result of the rapid increase of the Primary School-age Population currently growing at an average annual rate of 3 percent. The proportion of children enrolled in Class I compared to the appropriate Class One age Population increased from 59.1 percent in 1974/75 to 60.5 percent in 1975/76. This implies that up to 1975 about 40 percent of the children eligible for admission in Class One were not enrolled in schools. This compounds the problem of achieving universal primary education. The progress towards achieving this goal has been rather slow.

13. The proportion of qualified teachers remains very low at 40.2 percent in 1975/76. This is only a slight improvement to that of 1974/75 of 39.6 percent. In 1975/76, among the teachers in the four regions, the Southern Province had the highest proportion of qualified teachers of 47.3 percent, while that of the Western, Eastern and Northern Provinces were 38.9, 38.1 and 28.0 percent respectively. The pupil teacher ratio in 1974/75 was 36:1, this declined to 32:1 in 1975/76. The Western Area had the highest pupil-teacher ratio of 35:1. Those of the Eastern, Northern and Southern Provinces were 32:1, 32:1 31:1 respectively.

14. From the total enrolment in primary schools in 1975/76, 39.6 percent of the pupils were girls. The Western Area had the highest percentage of girls enrolled- 47.2 percent while the Southern, Eastern and Northern Provinces had 42.0, 36.7 and 34.8 percent respectively.

15. The following activities continued in the 1975/76 school year:-

(a) the primary school broadcast in Music, Health Education and spoken english.

(b) the singing competition

(c) the council of Headteachers

(d) in-service training courses organised for teachers of science, mathematics and social studies.

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16. The Ministry continued to strengthen the primary inspectorate by organising training programmes and providing transport facilities for inspectors and supervisors.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

17. A pass in the Selective Entrance Examination continued to determine the eligibility of pupils for admission into secondary schools. All of the successful candidates in 1975/76 examination were placed in secondary schools. This was made possible by the opening of a few new schools and by continuing to make use of the double shift system through the joint effort of the Ministry of Education and the Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools.

18. The enrolment at the secondary level continued to expand at an annual growth rate of 7.3% in 1975/76 as compared with 5.6 percent per annum during 1974/75. It increased from 45,294 in 1974/75 to 48,609 in 1975/76 with an additional increase of 6.8 percent. The number of secondary schools in the country increased from 122 in 1974/75 to 132 in 1975/76. The percentage of repeaters declined from 22.1 percent in 1974/75 to 21.3 percent in 1975/76. The percentage of dropouts also declined slightly from 8.4 percent in 1974/75 to 8.1 percent in 1975/76. The retention rate improved slightly from 46.3 percent in 1974/75 to 47.1 percent in 1975/76.

19. The percentage of qualified teachers in secondary schools increased from 65.0 percent in 1974/75 to 67.6 percent in 1975/76. The pupil-teacher ratio increased slightly from 21:1 in 1974/75 to 22:1 in 1975/76.

20. Great strides were made towards the diversification of the curriculum with increasing attention being put on Technical and Vocational subjects and the teaching of Agriculture.

21. During the period under review, the Ministry also took great strides in strengthening the professional competence of Secondary School Inspectors by organising training programmes for them.

22. The Ministry continued to receive qualified teachers from the three organisations - Voluntary Services Overseas (V.S.O), the Peace Corps and the Canadian University Students Overseas (CUSO) in various subject areas especially science, mathematics and technical subjects. The Ministry also recruited contract teachers from overseas and the neighbouring African States. Meanwhile, the training of Sierra Leoneans to replace these expatriates continued to operate successfully.

23. The Ministry continued to award scholarships to deserving pupils in secondary schools. About 10% of secondary school pupils had government scholarships in 1975/76 school year. 3 percent of secondary school pupils had scholarships from private organisations. Government scholarships cover fees only.

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24. In compliance with the National Development Programme the emphasis was still on improving existing facilities in Secondary Schools. Thus the provision of adequate staff and equipment for existing Secondary Schools continued to be more emphasised than establishing new ones. During the period under review, the Sierra Leone IDA Second Education Project was planned to re-house, extend and equip selected secondary schools.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

25. The two Technical Institutes in Freetown and Kenema and the two Trade Centres in Kissy and Magburaka together with a number of vocational schools continued to function in 1975/76.

26. The Technical Institute in Freetown continued to provide sub-professional courses in the Technological and Commercial fields while the Kenema Technical Institute and the Vocational Centres continued to provide training in Building and Engineering Trades.

27. Total enrolment in the Technical Institutes and Trade Centres increased from 799 in 1974/75 to 840 in 1975/76. This shows an annual growth rate of 5.1 percent. The Pupil-teacher ratio increased from 8:1 in 1974/75 to 11:1 in 1975/76. The proportion of professionally qualified instructors increased from 58% in 1974/75 to 61.5 percent in 1975/76.

28. In the fields of Technical and Vocational Education the policy is to ensure relevance of the training to meet the needs of Industry, the community and the individual. This policy was pursued in the period under review partly by strengthening the existing Technical Institutions and Vocational Schools, and partly by introducing foundation courses - Vocational subjects in Secondary Schools.

29. Investment was channeled through the First and Second IDA Education Projects and Technical Assistance through the Sierra Leone/U.N.D.P./I.L.O. Vocational Training Project during the period under review.

HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

30. During the period under review, work in this area has made favourable progress with increasing diversification of curricula in schools.

31. In addition to the work in schools, activities with several centres of domestic studies throughout the country continued to make progress. In 1975/76 the number of Home Economics Centres increased from 12 to 14 in the Western Area. The growing awareness of the importance of teaching of home economics to both sexes manifested itself in increased funds for development of home economics. During the 1975/76 school year funds were made available for the completion of the two home economics centres in Makeni and Kenema.

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32. The Teacher Training Colleges continued to produce adequate number of trained and qualified Home Economics Teachers to man all the existing Home Economics Centres. Also, Home Economics specialist teachers continued to teach some aspects of Home Economics in the primary schools.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

33. A survey on Agricultural Education in schools and colleges were conducted in the 1974/75 school year and as a result,

(i) the Sierra Leone Association of Teachers of Agriculture was re-activated;

(ii) the Catholic Relief Services provided tools and equipment in primary and secondary schools and sunk deep water wells in primary schools;

(iii) plans were initiated for the formation of Young Farmers' Club in schools;

(iv) a Directory of Agricultural Teachers in Sierra Leone was prepared;

(v) plans to develop suitable curriculum for Agricultural instruction in schools and colleges were initiated.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

34. A policy on Business Education was worked out. Visits and inspections of schools and similar institutions continued in the 1975/76 school year.

35. To provide adequate and relevant skills to pupils so as to ensure that they are easily employable, preliminary activities related to staffing, equipment, curriculum and textbooks were embarked upon during the period under review.

TEACHER EDUCATION

36. The six Teachers Colleges continued to operate in 1975/76. Milton Margai Teachers College continued to offer Higher Teachers Certificate Courses while the

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other five Primary Teachers Colleges continued to offer Teachers Certificate Courses. The total enrolment in these colleges increased from 1,337 in 1974/75 to 1508 in 1975/76 representing an annual growth rate of 12.7%. The student-teacher ratio increased from 8:1 in 1974/75 to 10:1 in 1975/76. The increase in enrolment has necessitated the expansion of physical facilities in the colleges especially Bunumbu and Women Teachers Colleges. In 1975/76 an increasing number of qualified and suitable candidates continued to be turned away due to inadequate accommodation and other facilities.

37. The growing improvement in the standard of education of entrants to the Teachers Certificate Course continued in 1975/76. Statistics show about 50% of college students with full secondary education obtained passes in between 1 and 4 subjects in the G.C.E. 'O' Level Examinations.

38. The following major activities were implemented in 1975/76:-

(i) The new syllabus for the entrance examination to Teachers Colleges was compiled and made available to intending candidates;

(ii) An in-service course for teacher educators i.e. college tutors, Senior Inspectors (primary) and Curriculum Development Officers of the Institute of Education was conducted by a joint team of local and British Educators;

(iii) A programme for up-grading unqualified primary school teachers through a series of in-service training courses was prepared and approved;

(iv) In 1975/76 Bunumbu Teachers College was granted permission to conduct the Higher Teachers Certificate (HTC) Primary Programme. The Curriculum was drafted and scrutinised by a sub-committee of the Board of the Institute of Education. The Bunumbu Project is a joint Sierra Leone Government/ U.N.D.P. effort and provides a rural based curriculum. The students will be oriented towards life in a rural setting with a view to becoming community animateurs;

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

39. The number of institutions remained the same - the University of Sierra Leone consisting of Fourah Bay College and Njala University College. Both continued to offer courses leading to the award of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates mainly in the field of Pure and Applied Sciences, Arts, Education, Social Sciences and Agriculture.

40. Enrolment at the University of Sierra Leone declined slightly from 1,650 in 1974/75 to 1,642 in 1975/76. This may be attributed to a drop in the number of scholarships awarded to the University by the Sierra Leone Government. Over 95% of the Sierra Leonean students at the University continued to be on government bursary.

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The student-teacher ratio was 6:1 in 1975/76. The number of lecturers increased slightly from 266 in 1974/75 to 289 in 1975/76.

41. During the period under review, several meetings were held to discuss the second final draft report of the Sierra Leone Education Review which grew out of the University's awareness of its responsibilities to the nation. It attempted to evolve a long-term pattern of educational development for the country and to define within this pattern an appropriate and meaningful role for the University as a crucial instrument of national development. It embraced not only the formal system of education but also other forms of learning which take place in the village and in the home. During the period under review, a planning unit was created within the University Secretariat.

42. A proposal was also made during this period to establish a new Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) as an Institute of the University of Sierra Leone and to replace the existing Civil Service Training College. The objective of IPAM would be to train managers at all levels in both the public and private sectors and to assist organisations large and small, to improve their performance. This project was formulated as part of the Second IDA Education Project.

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

43. The Institute of Education which is an arm of the University of Sierra Leone continued to be in charge of the development of curriculum, Educational Research, organisation of in-service training programmes for primary school teachers and validating courses of study leading to the Higher Teachers' Certificate (HTC) and the Teachers Certificate (TC).

44. During the period under review, the activities of the Curriculum Revision Division were still concentrated in the following major subjects:- English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The Curriculum Revision Division was also able to mount the first National Curriculum Conference during the period under review. The Conference succeeded in providing guide-lines for future curriculum development activities.

45. As already mentioned under Teacher Education, in the 1975/76 school year, the Institute in collaboration with the Ministry of Education conducted an in-service course for teacher educators.

46. Moreover, during the period under review the Educational Research Division of the Institute was strenthened with the appointment of a Senior Research fellow and two Research Officers. In June 1976, the Research Division organised a Regional Educational Research Conference with sponsorship from the Ford Foundation and the International Development Research Council (IDRC) of Canada.

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EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADULT EDUCATION

47. The Planning Unit continued to be strengthened in personnel and competence. To cope with its role in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of short-term and long-term plans for the development of education and also for the analysis of statistical data, the following specialised senior posts were agreed upon as part of the SECOND IDA EDUCATION PROJECT IN 1975/76:

1 Deputy Chief Education Officer (Planning)
2 Senior Education Officers for School Buildings and general planning
3 Planning Officers for Finance and Economics, Research and School Mapping
1 Statistician

48. Furniture, equipment, a vehicle and fellowships were also to be provided under the Second IDA Education Project.

49. Before the period under review, a statistician and two Educational Planners had already been recruited in addition to the Principal Education Officer (Adult Education and Planning).

50. Adult Education continued to be part of the Educational Planning Unit. The Ministry of Education continued to co-ordinate Adult literacy programme of voluntary organisations through the National Literacy Committee. The Ministry of Education continued to give subsidies to voluntary organisations for example the Provincial Literature Bureau which produces reading materials in the local languages. Functional Literacy Work continued to be done by voluntary organisations and some primary school teachers. The emphasis continued to be put on functional literacy although the curriculum includes the general principles of Reading, Writing and Counting.

51. The National Literacy Week which is a yearly event was celebrated throughout the country during the period under review.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

52. During the period under review several visits were made to educational institutions by the staff of the Physical Education Unit. During these visits, focus on some teaching techniques with major games and sports were emphasised in the colleges. Workshops were conducted at the various regional headquarters at which teachers were encouraged to improvise teaching material, especially at Primary School Level. Intra-mural and extra-murals in soccer, volleyball and netball for primary schools were contemplated. Jointly, with the National Sports Council, a ten-day Seminar, sponsored by the U.S.I.S. in Sierra Leone, was held in August 1975.

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53. At high school level, the 1975/76 'All Western Area Secondary Schools Track and Field Championships' were restructured in Freetown as the National Stadium was under construction. One level of competition for Senior Boys and Girls was organised. The Teachers Colleges continued to foster the ideas of Physical Education in their curricula and also encouraged Inter-Collegiate Athletic Championship.

ARTS EDUCATION

54. The unit continued to be concerned with the development of cultural and aesthetic education through the disciplines of visual arts, music, dance and drama, and folk-lore literature in primary and secondary schools and teachers colleges.

55. During the period under review, the following tasks were undertaken:-

(1) the production and trial testing of curriculum materials for primary and secondary schools and teachers colleges;

(2) research in the area of indigenous music and songs, and into the problems of harnessing local resources and skills, materials and tools for optimum use within the classroom;

(3) the designing and implementation of a programme of a yearly festival known as'schools and colleges Annual Festival of the Arts (SCAFA);

(4) organisation of a series of regular seminars and work-shops with a view to up-grade the stock of knowledge of the teachers.

SCHOOL BROADCASTING UNIT

56. There was a significant expansion in the work of the unit in terms of added programmes and Broadcasting Air - time during the period under review. A greater flexibility was afforded in the planning of individual school Timetable by giving equal listening opportunities to schools in both shifts.

57. The Unit prepared various programmes for audience at nursery, primary and secondary schools and Teacher Training Colleges. The programmes continued to be transmitted by the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Services.

58. Apart from the regular Broadcasts, the unit continued to operate a transcription service whereby on request, programmes were duplicated and sent to schools to be used at their convenience.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

59. In the 1975/76 school year, guidance counselling was established in twenty-four pilot secondary schools and Teacher Counsellors were located in each of the secondary schools.

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60. During the period under review, school visits to many parts of the Provinces and the Western Area were made for the purpose of counselling pupils. Two handbooks for teachers and students were produced. Moreover, follow-up programmes for two categories of pupils were instituted - those with an achievement potential and those who are highly motivated but lack the mental capability.

UNESCO NATIONAL COMMISSION

61. During the period under review a seminar on 'Development Support Communication Strategies for effective National Development Planning' was sponsored by UNESCO and the Sierra Leone National Commission for UNESCO and organised by the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service and the Ministry of Education with support from the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning.

62. Sierra Leone also participated in the Unesco Training Course for English speaking countries for new secretaries and officials of National Commission Secretariats held in Paris.

PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

63. The West African Examinations Council continued to direct all Public Examinations for secondary schools and private candidates. These examinations include the Selective Entrance Examination, the G.C.E. Ordinary and Advanced Levels, R.S.A. and City and Guilds. Performance in these examinations improved during the period under review although success in four or more subjects at the G.C.E. Ordinary level was not encouraging.

SYSTEM OF SCHOLARSHIPS AND FOREIGN AID

64. During the period under review, the Government continued to award scholarships to students in colleges and in the University. However, the Government continued to apply its policy of not awarding scholarships to pursue abroad, courses that are locally available. Other sources of scholarship awards were charitable organisations, non-governmental organisations, and international and foreign organisations. The Ministry continued to utilise other forms of foreign aid for instance the supply of equipment, furniture as well as expertise.

FINANCE

65. The total Estimated Recurrent Expenditure allocation for the Ministry increased from Le16,358,319 in 1974/75, to Le17,409,677 in 1975/76 an increase of 6.4 percent.

66. The Estimated Development expenditure of the Ministry of Education in 1975/76 was Le2,550,000 of which Le1,889,500 was to be financed from domestic and Le660,500 from foreign sources. There was an increase over the previous budget 1974/75 of 5% in domestic resources and a decrease of 17% in foreign resources.

67. During the period under review, the Development budget, continued to be dominated by IDA Education Projects but less than in the last three years. The first IDA Project which began in 1969/70 was completed in the 1975/76 school year.

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68. The total estimated budget allocations for education in 1974/75 and 1975/76 were £18,988,319 and £19,959,677 respectively. These were 17% and 19% of the total Estimated National Budget for 1974/75 and 1975/76 respectively.

69. Parents, students and employing authorities e.g. religious organisations, Corporate Bodies etc. continued to bear a significant proportion of educational costs at all levels of the educational system.

SIERRA LEONE

ORGANIZATION CHART - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (EXISTING)

ANNEX 1
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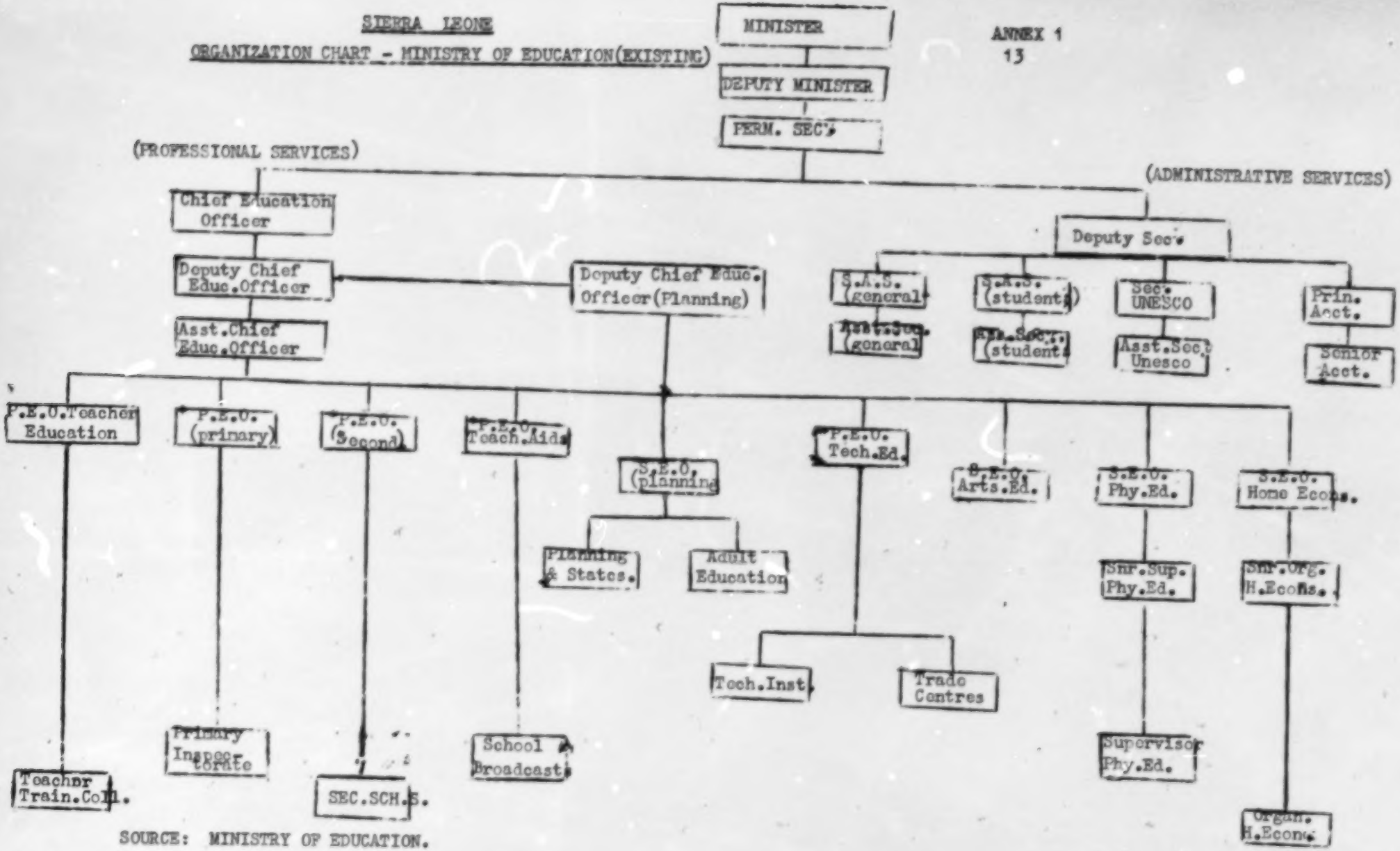
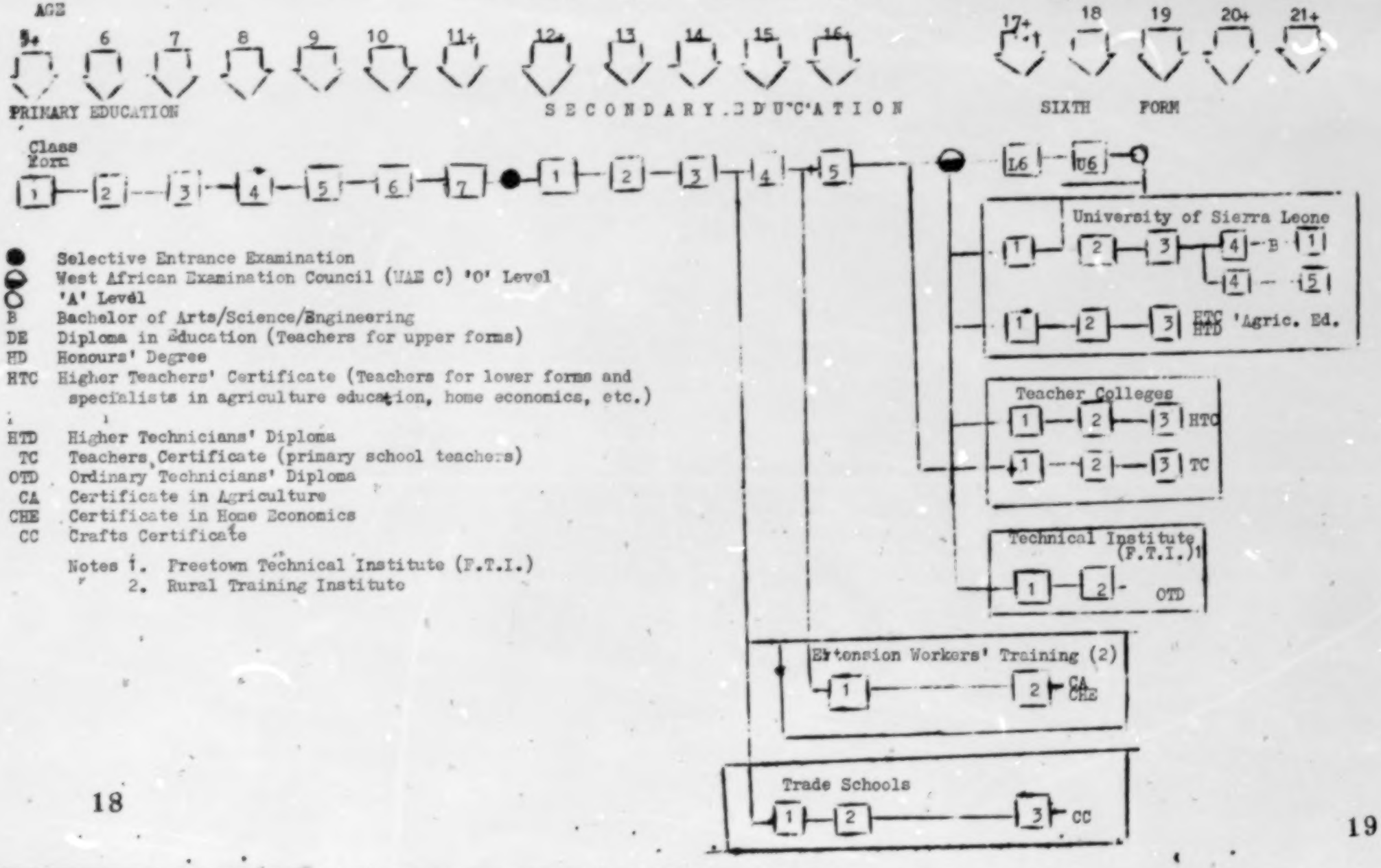


SOURCE: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.

PRINCIPAL EDUCATION OFFICER

SIERRA LEONE STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION 1976/77



- ● Selective Entrance Examination
- ◐ West African Examination Council (WAE C) 'O' Level
- ○ 'A' Level
- B Bachelor of Arts/Science/Engineering
- DE Diploma in Education (Teachers for upper forms)
- HD Honours' Degree
- HTC Higher Teachers' Certificate (Teachers for lower forms and specialists in agriculture education, home economics, etc.)
- HTD Higher Technicians' Diploma
- TC Teachers Certificate (primary school teachers)
- OTD Ordinary Technicians' Diploma
- CA Certificate in Agriculture
- CHE Certificate in Home Economics
- CC Crafts Certificate

Notes 1. Freetown Technical Institute (F.T.I.)
2. Rural Training Institute

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